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THE CHILD LYRIC

BY

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Catherine Needham

ENTITLED "The Child Lyric"

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Bachelor of Arts

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THE CHILD LYRIC

Chapter I
The Child Lyric distinguished from other types of Child Poetry

For centuries young poets have been putting old wine into new bottles, or pasting fresh labels over old. All the grand themes of human existence, all the emotions of love and grief and ambition have been sung so many times that it seems wellnigh hopeless to create a poem which does not merely echo a greater masterpiece of centuries gone by. Must we then betake ourselves, in desperation, to the praise of puppy-dogs and cement sidewalks and factory whistles, as the only alternative to puerile variations of the old themes? Homer and Dante and Shakespeare, upright upon the mountain tops, Chaucer and Boccaccio on their sun-bathed hills, Villon and Burns and Shelley swaying in the wind-blown tree-tops,- what have they not seen? What have they left unsung that was worthy of their singing?

And yet, wide as was their vision, the hope still persists that we may find sometime a little neglected hollow which these great ones have missed, a little shining plain with its own miniature rivers and mountain peaks and flowers, as eternal in their beauty as their grander fellows. Many have been the explorers of the soul of the mother, the soldier, the priest, the dying; many the artists who have drawn the intricate traceries of the "carte de tendre." But the world is still waiting for that genius who shall discover to us in all its wonder and beauty the heart of a little child.

"The stars are very big and important," someone has said, "yet children are infinitely more interesting. Many a scientist would give a fortune if he could know exactly how young children think and feel."[1] Two things everyone must at some time have been impressed with: the beauty and the inaccessibility of the child's world. Dim and incoherent are the thoughts of a child, tinged with wonder, rooted in emotion which is the deeper because it is as yet inarticulate. "It is not necessary to understand all in order to feel all."[2] If children were as much addicted to pen and ink as their elders, our libraries and magazines would be full of "petites pensées," more charming and often as profound as those of professional thinkers.[3] Let him who doubts the poetic possibilities in childish experiences ponder for a moment over the ideas and feelings underlying the little girl's prayer that her doll might have a soul.[4] Or let him but review his own fleeting memories of childhood: the joy of buttercups in the sunshine, the feel of the brook to bare feet, the wonder of the moon, his mother, fairies.

If there is any subject in the world which awakens in man only poetry and tender thoughts it is his own child self. Anatole France,[5] the cynic, the materialist, subscribing to the doctrine of love as "a matter of skin," opens to us the sanctuary of his childhood with a reverance such as he accorded nothing else. Pierre Loti, thorough-going skeptic as he was, yet feels such a passion of tenderness and faith as he re-lives his childish dependence upon his mother's love, that logic and theories and ingrained beliefs go down before the overpowering need for the shelter of her arms after death.[6] Our own blithe Autocrat,[7] chatting lightly

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[1] E.S.Jones in The Ill. Assn. of Teachers of English, Bulletin, V.VIII, No.IV.

[2] Anatole France, Le Libre de mon Ami, "La Revelation de la Poesie", p.118.

[3] Eugenie de Guerin tells us, "J'étais enfant que je faisais de petits soliloques qui auraient bien leur charme si je les retrouvais; mais aller chercher les choses de l'enfance: allez chercher des eaux a la source taric!" Journal, p. 33.

[4] The same, p.28.

[5] See preface to the Livre de mon Ami.

[6] In his Roman d'un Enfant.

[7] Holmes, The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, p.206 ff.: "My hand trembles when I offer you this. .....For observe, you have here no splendid array of petals such as poets offer you, nothing but a dry shell, containing, if you will get

lightly of Hindu philosophy and local politics, drifting humorously and without a break from the delights of Heaven to those of the dinner-table, can bring himself only falteringly to speak of the sacred memories of his childhood.

Of course, the average man may refrain from mentioning his childhood as the Englishman refrains from mentioning his wife, not so much because of his veneration for her as because he has forgotten her. The land of childhood is truly, for most of us, like the fabled continent of Atlantis, sunk beneath the sea. The attempt to reproduce in words the echoes which reach us at rare intervals from the troubled seas of memory, is a task not lightly to be performed. Perhaps the reinstatement of the past in all its literal exactness is an impossibility: such an attempt will always be, like Goethe's, a mixture of past truth with poetry of later growth.[1] But if it is the essence of all poetry that it is not emotion merely but emotion recollected, Guerin's simile (that to remember our youth is like collecting a few scanty drops of perfume from a broken flask)[2] need not discourage us: broken the flask may be, and few the recovered drops; suffice it only that they bring to us a breath from that garden where we wandered long ago.

Interest in the child as the subject of propagandist literature has of late years been growing apace; novelists have reserved their opening chapters for the childhood of the hero, Rolland going so far even as to analyze the emotions of a child one day old;[3] and an increasing tide of so-called "children's poetry" is issuing from the booksellers daily. But of the genuine child lyric there is scarcely a trace. In fact, not even the idea of the child lyric as a thing distinct from otherer kinds of poetry seems to have been definitely formulated by writers or readers. A child lyric, as the term will be used in this paper, is simply this: a poetical expression of the thoughts and emotions of a child, not from the standpoint of an adult observer, but coming as the utterance of the child himself.

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out what is in it, a few small seeds of poems. You may laugh at them, if you like. I shall never tell you what I think of you for so doing."

[1] "Dichtung und Wahrheit", Goethe calls his autobiography.

[2] In "Le Centaure".

[3] See Chapter I of his Jean Christophe.

The great bulk of children's poetry falls, not in the class of the child lyric, but into one of two other classes: either poetry written for children, as you would tell a story to a child or talk to him about things that interest him; or poetry written about children, as you would describe a child to a friend. A brief review of the types of poetry for children or about children will best serve to distinguish them from the child lyric, poetry which is from, or by, or of children.

"Poetry for children" is a convenient classification of juvenile literature for the librarian or the educator, but from the standpoint of literary criticism it covers an ungrateful and conglomerate mass. Among the varieties of poetry included in it are ballads and folk-songs, nursery jingles, fables and didactic verse, poetry upon themes connected with child life, standard poetry whose simplicity recommends it for children's reading, and a great bulk of inferior material which is classed as juvenile simply because it has failed to find a resting place elsewhere.

Ballads and folk songs express only in a very remote way, as remnants of the childhood of the race, the sentiments of children. As well might the "Song of Roland" or the "Elder Edda" be called child epics. A similar disposition must be made of that most precious inheritance, the Mother Goose rhymes which have come down to us through countless generations of mothers and children. As a record of children's taste in literature, they may throw some light upon child psychology; and by their associations in our lives they will always act as talismans to evoke the memories of childhood. But when tested apart, upon their own merits, very few of them meet the requirements of the child lyric. A glance over the titles in Mother Goose- "Simple Simon," "Little Boy Blue," "The Babes in the Woods," "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son" - will confirm the statement that these are not the expressions of a child's emotions, but tales told to provoke the mirth or the astonishment or the pity of children.

Among other verse handed out to the young, and considered at one time as the variety par excellence of juvenile literature, are the various forms of didactic poems. They bear much the same relation to the genuine child lyric as does a lec-

ture by a criminologist to "Les Pendus" of Villon. The generally reprehensible character of didactic poems does not exclude from their midst occasional poems of great beauty, such as Kingsley's

"So here hath been dawning
Another blue day",

or his tender lines:

"Be good, sweet maid and let who will be clever."

But such poems are obviously the expression of the teacher's sentiments, not the child's.

Poems dealing with the child's world, - the holidays, and the seasons with their sports,- should by right (as many of them pretend to be) be treated from the child's point of view. But as a result of careless workmanship, lack of sympathy, or a failure to grasp the real problem involved, most of such poetry fails to reach the standard of the child lyric.

The collections of simple classics included in child literature, possessing as their only common quality simplicity of thought and diction, are of too varied a nature to allow of discussion as a group.[1]

The second class of children's poetry, that written about children, has a greater homogeneity. Lowest in rank (not in intrinsic literary merit but in their approach to the child lyric) are the lullabies and kindred lyrics expressing the emotions aroused in the poet by children: poems such as Swinburne's "A Baby's Feet", or the recently translated Swedish poem[2] in which the child swinging is simply one

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[1]The fact that "Flower in the crannied wall", "Wreck of the Hesperus", "The Vision of Sir Launfal" and Tennyson's "Brook" were not intended to express a child's thoughts, does not, of course, unfit them for children's reading. But a protest should be made against the inclusion with simple classics, of derelicts from the four corners of the earth, thrust on the children's shelf in accordance with the obsolescent custom of relegating to the nursery bits of broken crockery, armless armchairs, vapid bread-puddings and bric-a-brac no longer fit for adult use. Whether or not Lady Eastlake is right in her belief that "A child's book must be more rich in interest, more true to nature, more exquisite in art" than a grown person's, it would certainly be to the interest of our literature as a whole to raise the standards in the children's department.

[2]By Simeon Nodson, (1885), translated by Gene Kaydon.

of the many lovely features of the landscape,- the cypress trees, the ocean, the flying gulls. Such poems are classed as child poetry as other poems might be classed as "flower poetry" or "star poetry" or "travel poetry". Above these come the descriptions of children which reveal a more intimate knowledge of child psychology: Hugo's "Elle avait pris ce pli," Whittier's "Barefoot Boy", Longfellow's "The Children's Hour", Mrs. Browning's "Edith", and the child descriptions of Wordsworth. Still higher, as a rule, and on the very borderline of the genuine child lyric, come those poems in which the poet and his subject are most nearly one: the reminiscences of his own childhood. Such a poem is Thomas Hood's

"I remember, I remember
The house where I was born."

Often, in such poems, a mere change of tense or personal pronoun would be sufficient to make them the utterances of the child himself, so little does the mature emotion hide or distort the child's.

Leaving the poetry written about children from the viewpoint of the adult observer, we pass to the true child lyric: that expression of feeling which comes direct from the heart of the child and which is marked by fidelity to the peculiar beauty of the child-spirit. In limiting the term to poems which conform to this standard, even the fact that a poem is actually written by a child is not sufficient warrant (paradoxical as such a statement may appear) for classing it as a genuine child lyric. Examine the verse written by Emerson when he was only eleven:

On the Death of Mr. John Haskins

"See the calm exit of the aged saint,
Without a murmur and without complaint;
While round him gathered, all his children stand,
And some one holds his withered, pallid hand,
He bids them trust in God, nor mourn, nor weep;
He breathes religion, and then falls asleep.
Then on angelic wings he soars to God,
Rejoiced to leave his earthly, mortal load;
His head is covered with a crown of gold,
His hands, renewed, a harp immortal hold;
Thus clothed with light, the tuneful spirit sings-
He sings of mercy and of heavenly things."[1]

[1] Cited by D.G.Haskins in his "Ralph Waldo Emerson: His Maternal Ancestors", p27.

Whatever might be said of the merit or lack of merit in this selection, or of the degree of poetical talent manifested by its author, no one, I think, would apply to such a poem the adjective "childlike." Granted that children often have the same thoughts and feelings as adults, granted that they often use a vocabulary approaching that of their elders: still, if there is nothing peculiar in a poem, either in content or in expression, to distinguish it from the common mass of literature written by adults, there is no reason, merely because of certain known chronological data, for classing it as a child lyric. No one would think of classifying a poem as a love-lyric simply because the poet, as ascertained from authentic biographical data, happened to be in love at the time he wrote it. Hard as it is for the scientist to define accurately the point at which childhood ceases or old age commences, or the exact moment when one falls in or out of love, there is no one who does not feel that childhood and love and old age have each their special poetical province; and it is only by their peculiar and distinguishing shades of feeling, not by accidental characters of length, or meter, or date of composition, that they should be classified.

Such poems, then, as those written by Chatterton and Blake and Emerson and other youthful poets can claim no more rightly than the other previously discarded classes of poetry the title of "child lyric"; and interesting as they would be to an investigator of juvenile precocity or to an inquirer into the evolution of individual poets, they are only of incidental value in the treatment of our present subject.

Certain other poems, however, also the first attempts of later famous poets, are more genuinely childlike in spirit. The little elegiac quatrain written by Samuel Johnson when he was five years old, really sounds like a child's production:

"Here lies poor duck
That Samuel Johnson trod on.
If it had lived it had been good luck,
For it would have been an odd one."[1]

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[1] Piozzi's Anecdotes, p.11.

The same might be said of Longfellow's attempt at the age of eight:

"Mr. Finney found a turnip,
And it grew and it grew"-

These are not the highest type of child lyric, certainly; but they have the genuine ring.

More poetical expression has been achieved recently by the little Conkling children. And children have long ago produced a poet-laureate from among their own ranks, in the person of Marjorie Fleming, the beloved neighbor of Walter Scott. A line or two of her verse will be sufficient to indicate the qualities for which we are searching. In Marjorie's description of how she enjoys climbing in at the foot of her beloved Isa's bed, she closes with the lines:

"Oft I embrace her feet of lillys,
But she has goton all the pillys."

We have here more than a mere matter of diction; neither the childish corruption of the word "pillows" nor the stereotyped "white as lilies" is sufficient to make it or mar it as a child lyric. What marks it once and for all is the primitive, sensuous enjoyment of snuggling down in a warm bed (especially someone else's bed) and the suggestion of utter humility in the fond child who, like a pup or a kitten, is quite content to rub up against the feet or to hug the knees of the worshipful grown-up. Who but a child or a genius could express such a feeling so vividly?

So much for the child. As for the genius, Robert Louis Stevenson has made us all familiar with the possibilities that await us in the garden of childhood; and Walter de la Mare has been culling from it such blossoms as may well tempt new explorers to that field. A few familiar lines from Stevenson's "Bed in Summer" will serve to fix in our minds those qualities which we shall look for in our search for the genuine child lyric:

"In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day."

Not all child lyrics will or should attain ~~the~~ such utter simplicity in thought and form;

but all of them should give the same illusion of being the child's own expression, and all of them should show, if not genius, at least the good taste and careful workmanship which we demand in other poetry.

Of the true child lyric of high artistic merit, little has been produced. Indeed, after a long and fruitless search for it through the maze of English literature, one is inclined to echo the remonstrance of the old darky: "I ain't ast you is you ain't; I done ast you is you is." And with so little creative effort, there has been, as may be supposed, practically no coherent body of criticism. The peculiar problems of the child lyric have been gropingly solved by individual poets, in accordance with no standards save those which apply to all poetry. We have a virgin field before us. And if, by taking the little, unfrequented pathway which leads to it, we miss some of the grandeurs of the mountain trails, or the safety of the beaten highroad of criticism, we shall at least escape some of the dust of our predecessors; our obstacles will be wild trailing vines or smooth pebbles, not harsh paving-stones cemented by old dogma; and our strayings from the truth will arise from the tempting beauties by the wayside, and not from false guide-marks set up by erring companions in the way.

Chapter II

The Historical Development of the Child Lyric in English Literature

The date at which the child lyric first appeared in English literature cannot be fixed with absolute certainty. But the statement may safely be made that the child lyric was first dimly conceived or, as it were, hit upon by chance, in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century; that an artificial type of it, on a low poetical and psychological level, was tried out during the eighteenth century as a moral instrument in the hands of the teacher; that it took its place as a poetical vehicle during the period of the romantic revival; and that by the end of the nineteenth century it had established itself as a small but increasingly important constituent in English literature. If four names of individual poets were to be singled out as representative of the four stages of development, those names would be Herrick, Watts, Blake and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Before the beginning of the seventeenth century, the appearance of the child in English poetry was limited (though the extent and inaccessibility of early English poetry makes generalizations hazardous) to passing references or descriptions in narrative poems,[1] to lullabies, and to carols of the Christ-child. In many of the latter the child speaks to his mother, but in his supernatural capacity, prophesying his later passion, rather than as a child; and in no case, I think, does the entire song come from his lips. Among the most child-like of the words of Jesus to his mother is the plea included in a fifteenth century carol, "This Endernight I saw a Sight":

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[1]Such as the school-boys in the "Prioress's Tale" of Chaucer.

"My mother dear, when time it be, thou take me up aloft,
And set me right upon thy knee, and handle me full soft,
And in thine arm
Thou lap me warm,
And keep me night and day;
And if I weep,
And may not sleep,
Thou sing, by-by, lullay."[1]

If the tone of this stanza were sustained throughout the entire poem, or if one were to detach this as a separate poem, we might perhaps accord it the title of the earliest child lyric.

Among the sixteenth century lullabies we find such songs as "My sweet little baby, what meanest thou to cry?" (1575),[2] Robert Green's "Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee" (1589)[3], Nicholas Breton's "A Sweet Lullaby- Come little babe, come silly soul" (1594)[4], and the "Lullaby- Golden slumbers kiss your eyes" (1599).[5]

Shakespeare's lullabies, and the lyrics which most nearly approach the child lyric, have reference usually not to flesh-and-blood children but to those other inhabitants of the land of childhood, Ariel and his brothers. One song, "When that I was and a little tiny boy",[6] suggests a childlike theme but fails to develop it further. The child characters in the plays would make an interesting study in themselves, but their speeches would hardly be regarded as lyrics.[7]

The poem which claims the title, unchallenged as yet, of the earliest child

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[1] Rickert, Ancient English Christmas Carols, p.59.
See also other fifteenth and sixteenth century carols in Rickert, pp.62,69, 71, 74; and in Segar, A Medieval Anthology, "The Questions of the Child Jesus", "Forbodings of the Passion", p.76, and others.

[2] First published in Byrd's Psalmes, Songs and Sonets etc., 1588; dated 1575 in Rickert, Ancient English Christmas Carols.

[3] From "Menaphon"; quoted in Carpenter's English Lyric Poetry,

[4] From the "Arbor of Amorous Devices"; quoted in English Lyric Poetry, p.65; "written about the time when he cruelly deserted his wife and young children," according to the introduction to Bullen's Lyrics from Elizabethan Dramatists, p.IX.

[5] From Thomas Dekker's "Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissell", acted 1599; published 1603. Probably not written by Dekker himself. Carpenter, English Lyric Poetry, p.65.

[6] Twelfth Night, Act V, Scene 1.

[7] Such a discussion would include William and Robin in "The Merry Wives"; Falstaff's page in "Henry IV"; Brutus's page in "Julius Caesar"; Arthur in "King John"; and Vifgilia's son in Coriolanus.

URCHIN'S DANCE

child lyric, is "The Urchin's Dance", published in Ravenscroft's collection of 1614, written perhaps much earlier.

"By the moon we sport and play,
With the night begins our day;
As we frisk the dew doth fall;
Trip it, little urchins all!
Lightly as the little bee,
Two by two, and three by three;
And about, about go we."[1]

Such a song has not, of course, the genuinely realistic touch of modern child lyrics. Intrinsically it does not differ much from the host of fairy songs such as we find in Shakespeare's plays. But it is a departure for a poem even to purport to be from a child.

HERRICK

From Herrick, of all the sweet singers of the seventeenth century, one would naturally look for something most genuinely fresh and childlike. The references to children found in his work[2] include instructive rhymes for children,[3] a considerable number of poems describing children or written in their honor,[4] references to them in literary figures dealing with other subjects,[5] and four poems which come from the child himself.[6]

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[1] From Thomas Ravenscroft's "Brief Discourse on Music, etc." 1614,- quoted in Carpenter, English Lyric Poetry, p.168.

[2] All the poems mentioned here were first published in "Hesperides and Noble Numbers", 1648.

[3] "God to be first served", Poems, ed.1915, p.363.

[4] "A Pastorall upon the birth of Prince Charles", p.85, "Upon a child that died," p.123, "To the Lady Crew upon the death of her Child", p.189, "Upon a Child", p.224 "Bastards", p.312; "To his Saviour" etc., p.354.

[5] "To Primroses filled with morning dew", p.104, beginning

"Why do you weep, sweet Babes?"

Another interesting conceit of Herrick's is that found in "To Virgins", p.120

"Or those Babies in your eyes,
In their christall nunneries,"

and repeated in "The Kisse", p.130, and "Upon her Eyes", p.193.

[6] "An Epitaph upon a Child", p.44; "Upon a Child, An Epitaph", p.69; "Graces for a Child", p.363; and "Another Grace, for a Child", p.364.

Among the poems about children one of the best is "To his Saviour, a Child; a present by a child":

"Go prettie child, and beare this Flower
Unto thy little Saviour;
.....
When thou hast said so, stick it there
Upon his Bibb, or Stomacher
And tell him (for good handsel too)
That thou hast brought a Whistle new,
Made of a clean strait oaten reed,
To charm his cries, (at time of need)."

Of the four poems which might be called child lyrics, the two epitaphs and the first of the graces are so in form only. The epitaph beginning:

"But born, and like a short delight,
I glided by my parents' sight,
That done, the harder fates denied
My longer stay, and so I died.",

can be distinguished only by its grammatical form from

"Here she lies, a pretty bud,
Lately made of flesh and blood."

It is in "Another grace for a child" that, by some magical art, Herrick has reproduced for us a child's very real and very piping voice.

"Here a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand:
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat, and on our all. Amen."

The quoting of it here will avail little to the child lyrist who is seeking a pattern for his verses: there are no tricks of meter or syntax or diction to be imitated, no baby-talk or lisping, no reference to dolls or bread and milk or to any other item of the childish "milieu". But few people can hear it without feeling what is meant by the "genuine childlike ring" of a poem;[1] and perhaps its very lack of obvious external marks will serve as the best illustration of the truth that the child lyric, like other genuine lyrics, can be judged by no rule of thumb estimate of its correctness, but only by the inexplicable and inimitable emotional quality which it arouses in the reader.

[1] Moorman, in his Robert Herrick, p.309, declares that this grace "might have come straight from A Child's Garden of Verses."

Colley Cibber's song "The Blind Boy" written probably about seventeen-

CIBBER hundred,[1] reveals a more conscious attempt at psychological analysis than does "The Urchin's Dance" or Herrick's "Grace". As the most pretentious effort before Watts's time, it deserves to be quoted entire.

"O say! what is that thing called light,
Which I must n'er enjoy;
What are the blessings of the sight,
O tell your poor blind boy!

You talk of wond'rous things you see,
You say the sun shines bright;
I feel him warm, but how can he
Or make it day or night.

My day or night myself I make,
Whene'er I sleep or play;
And could I ever keep awake,
With me 'twere always day.

With heavy sighs I often hear
You mourn my hapless woe;
But sure with patience I can bear
A loss I n'er can know.

Then let not what I cannot have
My cheer of mind destroy;
Whilst thus I sing, I am a king,
Although a poor blind boy."[2]

This poem is interesting not only because of its early date but because it is one of the very few lyrics dealing with the more pathetic aspect of childhood.

Far more important historically is the collection of Isaac Watts's "Divine Songs and Hymns, attempted in easy language for the use of children", which appeared in 1715. People nowadays are inclined to scoff at their stiff morality and the jerky, monotonous movement of the verse; and the collection has little indeed of lasting artistic value. There is something not only un-beautiful

WATTS but the least bit revolting in such strains as:

"What though I be low and mean,
I'll engage the rich to love me,
While I'm modest, neat and clean,
And submit when they reprove me," [3]

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[1] Cibber lived from 1671 to 1757.
[2] Ritson's A Select Collection of English Songs, Vol. II, p.121.
[3] Chalmer, English Poets, Vol. XIII, p.95.

or in:

"Oft we see a young beginner
Practice little pilfering ways,
Till grown up a hardened sinner;
Then the gallows ends his days."[1]

Often, too, the songs open with generalities which afford not a glimpse of the childish spirit supposedly uttering them. Watts's purpose in writing the collection was entirely didactic and practical. His aim was not to give a beautiful rendering of a child's natural impulses, but to guide and restrain those impulses so as to make "the rising generation of great Britain.....a glory among the nations."[2] As a result, his poems have about the same value as a boy's letter home which has been dictated by the boarding-school master.

But the "Divine Hymns", it must be remembered, are a first attempt in a new field,[3] and, like all experiments, must be judged by the value of their example to later workers rather than by their intrinsic excellence.[4] The mere fact that Watts, a reputable man of letters, put his name publicly to any kind of child poetry, was a revolutionary move.[5]

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[1] Chalmer, English Poets, Vol. XIII, p.95.

[2] Preface to "Divine Songs."

[3] It must not be understood by this that there had been no didactic poetry of any kind for children. John Bunyan had written "A Book for Boys and Girls: or Country Rhimes for children"; but these verses made no pretense of being the expression of the child.

[4] Watts himself modestly calls his moral songs "A slight specimen....such as I wish some happy and condescending genius would undertake for the use of children, and perform much better." -a prayer to which all critics can devoutly say Amen.

[5] The sentiments of Samuel Johnson may be taken as representative of the general feeling at that time regarding the dignity of childhood and the work of education: "and for children", he says of Watts, after commending his charity to the poor, "he condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit," (the modern reader is inclined to wish that he had not laid them quite so entirely aside) "to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man, acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer, who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach."("Life of Watts", Chalmer's English Poets, Vol. XIII.) Only the plea of Christian love and discipline can save Watts from the stigma of having stooped to the level of the common nursemaid or hired tutor.

The quantity and variety, too, of Watts's work, mark an advance. To the meagre collection, before his time, of lullabies, epitaphs, and three scattered specimens of the child lyric proper, Watts adds (besides half a dozen general hymns, only called "children's", because of their simplicity, and three straight preachments in the second person) about twenty-five songs which he puts directly into the mouth of the child. That the feat is accomplished by sheer force, and indeed by a kind of intellectual fraud, cannot be denied. But we find in the songs at least a laudable attempt to use a child's vocabulary[1] and to treat of subjects which form part of a child's life.[2]

We may say in conclusion, then, that although Watts's songs for children are not in themselves valuable as artistic expressions of child life and thought, they are important historically as the first extensive attempt in poetry to speak in the person, and with the language, of a child.

PHILIPS

The work of Ambrose Philips, almost exactly contemporary with Watts, is, in a way, exactly complementary to the latter's child poetry. Instead of being directed at the child by way of reproof, or purporting to come from the child as moral resolutions, Philips's poems are largely descriptions of children, prompted by no other motive than that of expressing his love and admiration for them. The difference in tone may be traced chiefly to the different temperaments of the two poets; partly also to the occasions for writing their poems. Watts composed his "at the request of a friend, who has long been engaged in catechising a very great number of children of all kinds, ...children of high and low degree, of the church of England or Dissenters, baptised in infancy or not";[3] Philips addressed his to individual children in the families of intimate friends. He wrote, in other words, with his eye on the object.

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[1] Watts: "I have endeavoured to sink the language to the level of a child's understanding, and yet keep it, if possible, above contempt." Chalmer, English Poets, Vol. XIII, p.86.

[2] In such lines as "How rude are the boys that throw pebbles and mire", p.94.

[3] Preface to "Divine Songs".

In general, it may be said of Philips that the younger the child, the better his verses. Those addressed to Miss Carteret have least of the child in them,- probably because Miss Carteret herself was least a child. The "Supplication for Miss Carteret in the Smallpox" (July 31, 1725) refers to her youth only by the standardized eighteenth century terms of "innocence", "angelic grace" and "virgin face". The other poem "To the honourable Miss Carteret" is not a description of her at the time of writing but a prophecy of her beauties when she shall exert her

". .....maiden reign,
Absolute to save, or kill,
Fond beholders."

The verses addressed to her nine year old sister, "To Miss Georgiana" (August 10, 1725) are much in the same conventional strain, though with a few introductory hints of individuality in the subject. In the lines "To Miss Margaret Pulteney, in the Nursery" (April 27, 1727) a larger proportion of attention (eight out of sixteen lines, to be exact) is devoted to the child herself,

"This and that new thing admiring,
Much of this and that inquiring,"

before there comes the prophecy of lovers "ten years hence."

It is in the verses "To Miss Charlotte Pulteney, in her Mother's arms" (May 1, 1724) that Philips shows his real genius. Three of his lines:

"Little gossip, blithe and hale,
Tattling many a broken tale,
Singing many a tuneless song,"

will rank with any lines ever written about children: even with Hugo's "Elle avait pris ce pli", even with Lamb's "Parental Recollections". To have produced such lines as these for posterity should be enough, one would think, to compensate for a life time of suffering under the approbrious epithet of "Namby-Pamby."

SHENSTONE

Shenstone's "Schoolmistress" (1742) containing realistic descriptions of the children in a schoolroom, may be regarded as of historical importance. But it is of little interest to readers to-day.

In passing, mention might be made of the youthful poems of Johnson (already quoted in Chapter I), Chatterton and Pope. The latter's "Ode to Solitude", written at the age of twelve, illustrates how little of child life children are apt to exhibit in their ambitious attempts at poetry:

"Happy the man who, free from care,
The business and the noise of town,
Contented breathes his native air
In his own grounds."[1]

Chatterton's earliest work is distinguishable only in quality from his later poems.

In less than fifty years after the death of Watts he was followed by the "happier genius" whose coming he had hoped for. The child poetry of William Blake so far excelled in its total effect, the work of his predecessors, that he has arrogated to himself the title of the first poet of child life. In Watts we find the first teacher of children; in Philips, their admirer; Blake is the child himself.

BLAKE

There is hardly one among Blake's child poems which would not repay special attention. A general survey must suffice. His "Poetical Sketches" (1783), written between the ages of twelve and twenty, is disappointing as a reflection of his childhood. Such poems as "The Mad Song" and "How sweet I roamed from field to field", cannot be classed as child poems in any sense. "Blind-man's Buff", a realistic description of a child's game, is lacking in poetical or emotional fineness; and the "Song- I love the jocund dance" is of interest chiefly for its references to features in Blake's childish environment which served as a background for later poems.

In the "Songs of Innocence" (1789) appear the best of Blake's child lyrics. Even the two songs most nearly approaching the didactic poems of Watts,- "The Divine Image" and "Another's Sorrow,"- have a childlike sweetness in their philosophy which is seldom attained by the hymn writer. The "Introduction", "A Cradle Song" and "Holy Thursday" are the expression of the poet's feeling toward childhood rather than of the child's own feeling, but they lose thereby none of their fresh-

[1] Cited in Paston's Mr. Pope, p. 7.

ness and naïveté. "The Little Boy Lost" and "The Little Boy Found" are ballad-like in character. Among the remaining songs, two of the loveliest,- "Infant Joy" and the "Nurse's Song",- combine by their dialogue form, the attitudes of the older person and the child; while "The Echoing Green", "The Lamb", "The Little Black Boy" and the "Laughing Song" are most entirely and unequivocally the expressions of children.

The "Songs of Experience" (1794) include a number of child lyrics, but in a grimmer and more sophisticated strain. Many of them are companion pieces to those in "Songs of Innocence": "Infant Sorrow" gives the reverse of "Infant Joy", and "The Chimney Sweeper" fills in the darker shadows of child life. Blake's indignation against the cruel treatment of children was certainly a righteous one. But I think most readers prefer, as child poetry, the songs in which there is least of reformatory zeal or religious mysticism. It is of such lines as those from "Spring",

"Little lamb,
Here I am;
Come and lick
My white neck;
Let me pull
Your soft wool;
Let me kiss
Your soft face;
Merrily, merrily we welcome in the year",

that the critic is thinking, when he says that"the Songs of Innocence are without rival in our language for simplicity, tenderness and joy."[1]

WORDSWORTH

With the advent of Wordsworth, the child may be said to have come into his own. Wordsworth did not invent the child lyric; indeed, if we are to limit the term strictly, he can hardly be said to have written any at all. But his wide influence, and the prominent place accorded by him to his poems of childhood, definitely established the status which the child was to hold in the future as a subject for genuine poetry.

Of Wordsworth's "Poems written in Youth", only one, an "Extract from the Conclusion of a Poem, composed in anticipation of leaving school" (1786) gives any

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[1] Moulton, Library of Literary Criticism, p.62.

suggestion of a childish subject; and that suggestion is confined to the title itself.[1] Among the twenty "Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood",[2] one [3] is a description of the wind, told to a child by Wordsworth's sister Dorothy; two of them[4] are sermonettes for children; four[5] are reminiscences of Wordsworth's own childhood. ~~Compare the two referring to his sister with Maurice de Guerin's poems on the same subject~~. The remaining poems are descriptions and stories of children, the majority of them told in ballad style.

The "Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old"[6] is a vivid description similar to that of Philips's mentioned above. Wordsworth's blank verse conveys a deeper and richer poetical effect, perhaps, than the quick couplets of the earlier poem; but such a passage as

"solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs"

lacks something of the happy artlessness of

"Little gossip, blithe and hale,
Tattling many a broken tale,
Singing many a tuneless song."

Wordsworth shows, however, advance over Philips in his study of certain subtler shades of child psychology; for instance, when he speaks of:

"the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play."

Many of the ballads contain bits of dialogue which, detached from the narrative, might be considered as child lyrics: little Barbara Lewthwaite's speech beginning

"Drink, pretty creature drink"[7]

has long been a favorite, (somewhat altered and abridged) in school readers. But

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[1] Wordsworth was at the time of writing, of course, already sixteen years old.
[2] 1854 ed. p.54ff.
[3] No.VI.
[4] IV, XVII.
[5] I, II, III, XVI.
[6] V.
[7] XIV, The Pet Lamb.

in the main, sympathetic as the presentation is, we seldom enjoy the illusion, in Wordsworth, of getting the child's words direct; always they come to us through the medium of Wordsworth's own reflection. As he says himself of Barbara's speech to the lamb:

"- but half of it was hers, and one half of it was mine."

Other child poems are, for no apparent reason, scattered through other sections of Wordsworth's works instead of being classified with those devoted to childhood. In the "Poems founded on the Affections" it is interesting to note the large number dealing in some way with children.[1] In "Poems of Fancy"[2] and the "Address to my Infant Daughter, on being reminded that she was a month old that day,"[3] which begins with the astonished ejaculation:

"Hast thou then survived?"-

a strange fancy, indeed!

Such specimens as "To a child"[4] may be discarded in our search for the child lyric. And the opening sections of "The Prelude"[5], though they give good descriptions of childish sports and emotions, are reflective and philosophical rather than lyrical.

The best expression of Wordsworth's intensely emotional childhood, and of the fleeting memories of "delight and liberty" which all men cherish in greater or less degree, is found in the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality." Many criticisms might be made and have been made[6] both concerning the philosophical bearings of the poem and its literal truth as regards the experience of children in general. But

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[1] Poems, ed. 1854, p.68ff. Among others, the lullaby (XXV), the elegy (XXVI), the "Idiot Boy" (XXXI), "Michael" (XXXII), a didactic poem by Dorothy Wordsworth (XXXV), the "Childless Father" (XXVIII). the "Emigrant Mother" (XXIX), etc.

[2] p.113ff. [3] XXXII. [4] p.404. [5] p.444ff.

[6] See Arnold's Essay on Wordsworth, Essays in Criticism, Second Series. But that the ideas of the "Ode" are too old and persistent to be easily dissipated, may be seen by such passages as the following, first published 1628: "His father hath writ him as his own little story, wherein he reads those days of his life that he cannot remember, and sighs to see what innocence he hath out-lived. ..... Could he put off his body with his little coat, he had got eternity without a burden, and exchanged but one heaven for another." ("A Child", John Earle, Microcosmography.)

whatever may be said on such points, there can be little doubt of the poem's influence, by its genuine poetic beauty, in enriching and ennobling popular thought upon the forgotten or neglected beauties of childhood. And this mighty influence upon the thought of the world, rather than the actual production of poems which might strictly be termed child lyrics, is Wordsworth's big contribution toward the development of that form.

In the meantime, while Wordsworth and Blake were releasing their little works of art to a select audience of poetry lovers, the publishers and booksellers of children's books (of which there was a considerable stream by this time)[1] were busily getting together collections of moral verses which should meet the approval both of the child and of the parents and parsons, "Original Poems" (1804-5) by Anne and Jane Taylor and Adelaide O'Keefe[2] was one of the most popular of these volumes. A glance through the titles is enough to indicate the kind of verses it contained: such titles as "Meddlesome Matty", "Greedy Richard", and "The Little Boy who made himself sick".[3] Critics who were "brought up on the Taylors" find it hard, apparently, to judge their rhymes by common literary standards; but the ordinary person, unbiassed by childish associations, is apt to find little to admire in

THE TAYLORS "The dog will come when it is called,
THE LAMBS The cat will walk away",

the work of these "resolute moralists and unfaltering craftsmen", whose "metre is as sure and inevitable as the moral."[4]

The most important rival of the "Original Poems" was "Poetry for children" written by Charles and Mary Lamb in 1808 and published in 1809. The collection is a mixture of the usual varieties: sermons, little stories with gentle morals attached, and descriptions of children, in most cases from the standpoint of an older person. But something more than a dozen of them at least pretend to come from the child's

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[1] Cambridge History, Vol. XI, "Children's Books".
[2] Cambridge History, Vol. XI, p.425.
[3] Mentioned in Olcott, Children's Reading.
[4] Cambridge History, Vol. XI, p.425-6.

own lips. Of these, "Choosing a name"[1] is one of the most effective. "Motes in the Sun-beams"[2] and "The First Tooth",[3] in which a little girl expresses her jealousy of the baby in the family, are wonderfully suggestive and childlike subjects, but they are spoilt by a rigidity of diction and morality. "Which is the Favourite"[4] is a very natural reflection of a child about his brothers and sisters; while "Nursing"[5] and "The Lame Brother"[6] are touching and simple, one sung by a little orphan girl hushing her brother to sleep, the other addressed to an older brother as the younger helps him on his way to school. But the judgment implied in Lamb's own words is, after all, as nearly the correct one as any we can arrive at:. "You must read them, remembering they were task-work; and perhaps you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an Old Maid."[7]

That the failure of the work as a whole is not due, however, to inherent inaptitude of the Lambs for dealing with child subjects, but to the hampering and double limitations of poetic form and the didactic purpose required of children's books, may be seen by an examination of the prose tales, "Mrs. Leicester's School",[8]

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[1] Works ed. 1903, p.355.
[2] " p.359.
[3] " p.361
[4] " p.394.
[5] " p.366.
[6] " p.364.
[7] Letter from Charles Lamb to Coleridge, June 7, 1809- Works, Vol. VI, p.401.
[8] "Mrs. Leicester's School" deserves, it seems to me, a better knowledge and appreciation than that accorded to it by F.J.H.Darton in the Cambridge History, who dismisses it with the verdict: "a moral tale; rather a dull one in itself, but interesting because of its author and its style." (Vol.XI, p.427).
Certain other critics (prejudiced, perhaps, as contemporaries and acquaintances of the Lambs, but otherwise meriting as high credence as Mr. Darton) have bestowed higher praise upon "Mrs. Leicester's School". "Never have I read anything in prose" (Landor wrote to Crabb Robinson about one of the stories in 1831) "so many times over within so short a space of time as 'The Father's Wedding Day' ..... Show me the man or woman, modern or ancient, who could have written this one sentence: 'When I was dressed in my new frock, I wished poor mamma was alive, to see how fine I was on papa's wedding day; and I ran to my favorite station at her bedroom door'. How natural in a little girl is this incongruity- this impossibility! ..... The story is remarkable throughout- incomparable, inimitable." And Coleridge gives to the book equally high praise: "It at once soothes and amuses me to think- nay, to know- that the time will come when this little volume .... will be not only enjoyed but acknowledged as a rich jewel in the treasury of our permanent English literature." (Quoted in Gilchrist's Mary Lamb, pp.162-3.)

and of a poem which is among but not of the "Poetry for Children". "Parental Recollections", is not a child lyric in the limited sense in which we have chosen to use that term, but it is one of the finest lyrics about a child which the English language offers.

"A child's plaything for an hour;
Its pretty tricks we try
For that or for a longer space;
Then tire, and lay it by.

But I knew one, that to itself
All seasons could controul;
That would have mocked the sense of pain
Out of a grieved soul.

Thou, straggler into loving arms,
Young climber up of knees,
When I forget thy thousand ways
Then life and all shall cease."

To dilate upon the depth of feeling, the delicacy, the poetic compression of such lines as these would be to say little in many words. Perhaps the highest compliment we can pay them is to say that they are a fitting companion-piece to Lamb's own "Dream Children".

JAMES HOGG

Among the other poets of the romantic period there is little worthy of mention concerning children. "A Boy's Song", by James Hogg, however, exhibits a fresh, boyish joy in country sports.

"Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the gray trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me."[1]

MARJORIE FLEMING

But of all the child poems written at this time, the most genuine are those by Marjorie Fleming,-"Pet Marjorie" and "Little Wifie" Scott sometimes called her.[2] Herrick and Philips and Wordsworth had a deep love for children; Watts and the Lambs and the Taylors strove to speak in their words; Blake entered into the child's heart in a truly miraculous way: but Marjorie spoke not as a translator but in her own tongue. She was born January 15, 1803;

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[1] Poems for the Study of Language, Part One, p.32.

[2] Strangely enough, there is not the slightest mention of Marjorie in Lockhart's Life of Scott, although there are references to the older Mrs. Keith, Marjorie's

and when she died, December 19, 1811, she left behind her a journal and letters which are without a parallel in childish annals.[1] Polished literature they can in no sense be called; but as a written revelation of a personality, and of the personality of a real child, they could scarcely be equalled.

The most remarkable thing about Marjorie was, if one may say so, her extreme normality. Precocious as she was in her mental ability and her range of reading,[2] she was in every way a typical child: wholesome, loving, hot-tempered, not abnormally introspective. She had a remarkable gift of reciting passages from the great poets, such as often brought tears to the eyes of her astonished audiences; but we learn with delight that she was not above common enjoyment in nursery jingles, and spent many an hour instructing Scott in the intricacies of such things as

"Wonery, twoery, tickery seven",

Her vast eruditon, too, is softened to us by her extremely childlike feeling and spelling. No one but a child could have written the following bit, refreshing in its energy and its candor:

> "I am now going to tell you the horible and wretched plaege that my multiplication gives me you can't conceive it the most Devilish thing is 8 times 8 and 7 times 7 it is what nature itself can't endure."

Marjorie's narrative style in verse may be shown by the following lines,

"Dedicated to Mrs. H. Crawford, by the Author, M. F.:

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great-aunt, Dr. Brown says that "Sir Walter was in that house (Marjorie's) almost every day, and had a key."

[1] I have not been able to secure the complete collection. My knowledge is based upon the sketch "Marjorie Fleming" by John Brown, in the Little Classics series, Vol. 10; and the same, in Warner's Lib. of the Best Lit., under "Brown".

[2] "Thomson is a beautiful author," she writes, "and Pope, but nothing to Shakespear, of whom I have a little knolege. 'Macbeth' is a pretty composition, but awful one." And again, "Doctor Swift's works are very funny; I got some of them by heart." "Morehead's sermons are I hear much praised, but I never read sermons of any kind; but I read novelettes and my Bible, and I never forget it, or my prayers."(p.125).

"Three turkeys fair their last have breathed,
And now this world forever leaved.
Their father,and their mother too,
They sigh and weep as well as you;
Indeed,the rats their bones have crunched;
Into eternity thei're laanched.
A direful death indeed they had,
As wad put any parent mad;
But she was more than usual calm;
She did not give a single dam."I

The last word,as Dr.Brown remarks, " is saved from all sin by its tender age,not to speak of the want of the n ."

Another theme which Marjorie treats is one which is typically and universally childlike. Is there a child in the world who has not at some time or other sneaked in at the foot of mother's bed,or who has not enjoyed a delicious hour with a sister or brother tracing strange faces and rivers in the pattern of the wall paper or the cracks in the plaster?"If such there be,go mark him well." Pet Marjorie was normal in this respect. "I went into Isabella's bed ",she says in one of her entries," to make her smile like the Genius Demedicus or the statute in an ancient Greece,but she fell asleep in my very face,at which my anger broke forth, so that I awoke her from a comfortable nap. All was now hushed up again,but again my anger burst forth at her biding me get up."

Marjorie celebrates a happier incident by an

"Ephibol on my Dear Love,Isabella",
"Here lies sweet Isabel in bed,
With a night cap on her head;
.....
She and I in bed lies nice,
And undisturbed by rats or mice."

And in another place,

"I love in Isa's bed to lie,
Oh,such a joy and luxury;
The bottom of the bed I sleep
And with great care within I creep;
Oft I embrace her feet of lilys,
But she has goton all the pillys.
Her neck I never can embrace,
But I do hug her feet in place."

I Marjorie's prose version of the story is as interesting as her later poetical development: "I am going to tell you of a melancholy story. A young turkie of 2 or 3 months old,would you believe it,the father broke its leg,and he killed another! I think he ought to be transported or hanged." (page 127)

. Only by an extraordinary act of imagination could an older person reinstate that child-like state of mind and soul in which utter humility is blended with sensuous enjoyment. Such an expression of feelings peculiar to childhood, and not precocious imitations of standard poetry, should be the aim in original work by children. In these days psychotherapeutics and Montessori methods there is hope for a considerable crop of child geniuses: the difficult thing will be to keep the genius a real child. Pet Marjorie was such a one.

TENNYSON

As the nineteenth century progressed, child literature of all sorts grew more and more abundant. There is hardly one among the Victorian poets who did not made some mention of children; but not all of their work, of course, can come under the class of child lyric. Tennyson wrote nothing which could be classed as such. Those of his poems which are quoted in children's collections are such things as his lullabies, "Minnie and Winnie", a highly fanciful and playful lyric, and "The City Child" in which the child serves as a mere excuse for the refrain of "Daisies and king cups and honeysuckle flowers."[1]

BROWNING

It has been beautifully said of Browning that he "looked into the child's heart, and longed to dwell there as in a sanctuary". If indeed he did so he has failed to leave much tangible evidence of his longing except in the character of Pippa. There is undoubtedly a spirit of youth and freshness in Pippa's songs, but one hesitates to give to them the title of child lyrics. They picture for us, it might be said, not the living features of a child but the general idea of childhood.

MRS. BROWNING

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems express as a rule pity and humanitarian ideals of a reformer rather than the child's own feelings. The "Song for the Ragged Schools of London", and ~~the~~ "The Cry of the Children", are protests against civic neglect and child labor. "A Child Asleep" and "A Child's Grave at Florence", contain better descriptive touches. "A Child's Thought of God" is the only one written in the child's own words; and

[1] Lowe, Lit. for Children, pp.49-50.

although there is a hint too much of an older person's mystical philosophy, the poem may be ranked as a child lyric.[1]

ROSSETTI

Rossetti has made a very interesting and a very effective use of a child in "Sister Helen", in which the tragic story is told by dialogue between the heroine and her little brother.

> "But if you have done your work aright, Sister Helen,
> You'll let me play, for you said I might."
> "Be very still in your play to-night, Little Brother."

The childlike tone is kept remarkably well throughout the piece, but it is, after all, subordinated to the dramatic and imaginative needs of the story; and for that reason the poem is less purely a child lyric than the poems in which the portrayal of the child's thoughts is the end and not the means.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Christina Rossetti, in her "Sing Song", has written not only nursery jingles, but some very pretty and realistic child lyrics,[2] The best known among them are the songs "Who has seen the wind?" and "Fly away, fly away over the sea." Others, not so musical, express childish curiosity and astonishment quite as vividly.

> "What does the donkey bray about?
> What does the pig grunt through his snout?
> What does the goose maan by his hiss?
> Oh, Nurse, if you can tell me this,
> I'll give you such a kiss."

In another the close is especially natural and effective:

> "What is pink? a rose is pink
> By the fountain's brink,
> What is red? a poppy's red
> In its barley bed.
> .....
> What is orange? why an orange,
> Just an orange!"

JEAN INGELOW

Two lesser poets who wrote about the same time as the Rossettis' deserve mention for the sweetness of their child poetry, Jean Ingelow makes use of child dialogue, much as Rossetti did in his "Sister Helen", in sketches such as "Supper at the Mill" and "Afternoon at a Parsonage",

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[1] See Poems, ed.1844, pp.155, 156, 206 and others. / Works, 1906.

[2] The four poems mentioned here are found on pp.438,436,433,432, Poetical

"A Mother Showing the Portrait of her Child" has nothing from the child itself. But the opening one of her "Songs of Seven" is an admirable blending of realistic simplicity and delicate fancy.

"There's no dew left on the daisies and clover,
There's no rain left in heaven:
I've said my 'seven times' over and over,
Seven times one are seven,
I am old, so old, I can write a letter;
My birthday lessons are done;
The lambs play always, they know no better;
They are only one times one."
.....
And show me your nest with the young ones in it,
I will not steal them away;
I am old! you will trust me linnet, linnet-
I am seven times one to-day."[1]

"Echo and the Ferry", (by some critics considered Miss Ingelow's best work) is not a direct child lyric, but a reminiscence of childhood.[2]

ALLINGHAM

William Allingham's verses have something of the bright fancifulness of Blake's. His "Wishing",[3] "Robin RedBreast"[4] and the "The Fairies"[5] are favorites with children. The first of these, beginning "Ring-ting, I wish I were a primrose," keeps most closely to the thought of a child.

HOUGHTON

Lord Houghton's poems have enjoyed wide popularity in books for children. His poems are not all of them in the strictest sense child lyrics, but such a poem as "Lady Moon",

"'Lady moon, lady moon, where are you roving?'"
'Over the sea.'
'Lady moon, lady moon, whom are you loving?'
'All that love me'
'Are you not tired with roaming, and never
Stopping to rest?'
'I must obey my dear father in heaven:
He knows what is best",[6]

expresses remarkably well a child's wonder at the moon.

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[1] Poems, ed. 1906.
[2] Miles, Poets and Poetry, Vol. XVIII.
[3] Poems for the Study of Language
[4] Lowe, Lit. for Children, p.61.
[5] The same, p.52.
[6] Lowe, Lit. for Children, p.54.

Many other writers for children failed to produce any true child lyrics. Lewis Carrol's "The Walrus and the Carpenter", and Kingsley's "My dearest child-" and "The Lost Doll",[1] among other favorites, are not written from the child's own viewpoint.

CARROL and KINGSLEY

The two biggest figures in nineteenth century child poetry (in England, at least) were William Brighty Rands and Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson wrote later and is more widely known; but the work of Rands in many ways equals Stevenson's, and it can, at any rate, claim historical precedence. Moreover, Rands has accomplished at least one small feat which Robert Louis Stevenson did not attempt: the expression of a little girl's feeling for her doll. (Stevenson parades his tin soldiers, to be sure; but a real doll is quite different.) In his "Dolladine" and "Dressing the Doll", the cumulative effect produced by the series of little garments handled comes to a climax in the magical evocation of the little buckled slippers,- those tiny confections of patent leather with their shiny yellow soles, those crowning glories of a doll's wardrobe, which have aroused such passionate longing or such equally passionate pride of possession in thousands of little girl hearts.

RANDS

Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses" has been so lauded by so many critics that it seems wellnigh hopeless to add to its praise. And the garden itself is so filled with all loveliness that the newcome explorer is tempted to go no further, but to stop here, and stay "for good and all". But if there is one thing we learn from Stevenson, one thing which would be worth while if we learned nothing else, it is that half has not been told of that land where

STEVENSON

"Little thoughtful creatures sit"

Like all true poets and true artists, Stevenson suggests far more than he says. We catch a glimpse of the curious twists and turns of a child's logic in such poems as "Looking Forward" and "Foreign Children"; he paints for us fleeting pictures

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[1] Wiggin, Posy Ring. p.166.

in the dark, and whispers of the mystery of the world in "The Wind", "My Shadow" and "Windy Nights". But what depths of feeling he leaves yet to be sounded in these themes and others, even in the longing of children for the Little People,

"And all the playthings come alive,"

so vividly touched upon in "The Little Land" and "The Flowers".

Stevenson's verses may certainly be called child lyrics, and child lyrics of the highest order. A few of the poems are addressed by the poet to children; and in many of them we have something more than a child's thought; but the poems are, most of them, consciously intended to come from the child himself: and even in the most fanciful of them, Stevenson keeps pretty closely to childish syntax. The beauty which can be attained by utter simplicity of thought and expression has nowhere been better exemplified than in "At the Seaside":

"When I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
To dig the sandy shore.

My holes were empty like a cup;
In every hole the sea came up,
Till it could come no more."

BRYANT
LONGFELLOW
WHITTIER

Of the American poets before the time of Robert Louis Stevenson, Bryant, Longfellow and Whittier are among the best known children's poets. Their work, however, falls mostly into the class of poetry suitable by its simplicity or by its subject matter for children's reading: for example, "The Planting of the Apple-tree" and "Robert of Lincoln"; Longfellow's "The Village Blacksmith", "Hiawatha", and "Paul Revere's Ride"; Whittier's "The Corn Song" and "Snowbound". Longfellow and Whittier have written also good descriptions of children, such as the former's "Children's Hour" and the latter's "Barefoot Boy" and "In Schooldays"; and Emerson's "Threnody" contains some good descriptive touches. But none of these poets have contributed to the child lyric proper. Their contributions to the general movement is of the same kind as that by Wordsworth, and of a degree corresponding to their general influence in poetry and public sentiment.[1]

[1] Whittier should be remembered also for his attractive collection of poems, /Child Life.

Before taking up the three best known American child lyrists, Field, Riley and Dunbar, a word might be said about the poetry of Walt Whitman.

WHITMAN

It never occurred to Whitman, probably, to write a child lyric; but he kept always so much of his childhood alive in him that in many of his poems he slips back unconsciously into a child's way of thinking and speaking. The most obvious mark of this trait is his tendency, amounting almost to a mannerism, to catalogue objects and impressions,- a method which is regarded by psychologists as especially peculiar to young children.[1] And in his "Out of the Cradle" we have a conscious reproduction of one of his experiences as a child: one of the most vivid and passionate reminiscences of childhood that has ever been written. It is not a child lyric in form; few people would think of calling it a child poem at all. Whitman, interested not in portraying childhood but in portraying a vital and still living experience, makes no attempt to separate his child self from his present self or to adhere to childish diction. But it is from such poems as this, in which the man lacks by the faintest tremor a complete transformation into his child self, that the true child lyric is most apt to evolve.

FIELD

Eugene Field, the oldest of the famous American trilogy who lived and wrote in the second half of the nineteenth century, has written, among a hundred or so poems of childhood, more than a score of lullabies. There is a Japanese lullaby, a Dutch one, a Jewish and a Corsican, and Armenian lullabies. Given Field's lullabies, most people would not miss the rest of his work:- with the exception, of course, of "Little Boy Blue". Others of Field's poems are good, especially those directly reminiscent of his own dreaming childhood. "When I was a Boy" with its refrain:

"When I was a boy, a little boy,"

rounds out for us the haunting but unsatisfying song in "Twelfth Night",

"When that I was and a little tiny boy,"

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[1] De Selincourt attributes Whitman's love of catalogue to a deliberate defiance of the conventions. "The catalogue owes its place in his poetic structure, to the fact that it is the last thing the reader would expect to find there" W-W; p.141.

"Over the Hills and Far Away" is similar in tone, and gives us a similar satisfaction by its echo of the old nursery rhyme. The descriptions of small children, their frolics, their cuddlesomeness, are beautifully drawn. But the poems which Field has put into the mouths of children themselves are few and unworthy of his own talent. "The Naughty Doll"[1] is the story of a love affair between a doll and a vase, while "A Piteous Plaint"[2] is a satire upon the conventional lovelorn swain, and a travesty upon childhood. "Seein' Things"[3] is better, but in its Mark Twain brand of humor we find it hard to recognize the author of "Little Boy Blue".

RILEY

Riley's child poetry is probably greater in amount than that of any other child poet; and fully two thirds of it is not only in the direct form of the child lyric, but is expressed in actual baby-talk and childish solecisms. The ordinary daily work and fun in a Hoosier community, are in a tone similar to that of "Little Orphant Annie".

"Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
And wash the cups and saucers up an' brush the crumbs away..
An' all us other childern, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire, an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the gobble-uns 'at git you, ef you don't watch out!"

There is needed for such verses no particular subtlety or refined psychological analysis: only a keen pair of eyes and ears, a good memory, and a native relish for local ways. But in other of Riley's poems, such as "The Happy Little Cripple" and "An Idiot" we have sharper-cut etchings of individuals. The latter is unique in child poetry: Barnaby Rudge, we have in prose, and Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy" in narrative verse; but here we have the idiot's description of himself:

"I'm only thist a' idiot-
That's what folks calls a feller what
Ain't got no mind
Of any kind,
Nor dont know nothin' he's fergot.-
I'm one o' <u>them.</u> - But I know why
The bees buzz this way when they fly.-
'Cause honey it gets on their wings.
Aint thumbs and fingers funny things?

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[1] Poems, ed.1910, p.217.
[2] " p.344.
[3] " p.310.

What is it when you die? I know.--
You can't wake up agin, ner go
To sleep no more-
Ner kick no more,
Ner lay an' look and watch it snow.
An' when folks slaps and pinches you-
You don't keer nothin' what they do,
No honey on the angel's wings!
Aint thumbs and fingers funny things?"

The "Idiot" is not fairly representative of Riley's work, but it is an interesting departure in more ways than one. The pathetic touch half hinted in the boy's reference to "when folks slaps and pinches you" is unusually subtle for Riley. As a rule he tends to give us pathos too undiluted, and joy a trifle too substantial,- in a word, he lacks the delicate restraint and refinements of Stevenson's consummate artistry. The environment, the external life of an Indiana child, he pictures to perfection; the finer shades of feeling and fancy, the more elusive qualities of

"Little things with lovely eyes",

he fails somehow to grasp and fix in his poetry.[1]

DUNBAR

Paul Lawrence Dunbar, younger than Riley and a fervent admirer of his poetry, followed pretty much in the steps of his master, writing in dialect and (in about half of his childhood poems) speaking from the standpoint of the child. "A boy's Summer Song", "Johnny Speaks", "Wadin' in de Crick" express a pickaninny's delights; "Curiosity" and "Oportunity" are anticipations of apple dumplings and "cakes an' t'ings". "Scamp" is in praise of Mother:

"Ain't it nice to have a mammy
W'en you kin' o' tiahed out.....
To smile so sweet,
An' wash yo' feet,
An' leave 'em col' an' damp;
Den hit's come let me undress you now,
You lazy little scamp".

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[1]Dunbar says of Riley:

"If there's lesson to be taught,
He never fears to teach it;
An' he puts the food so good an' low
That the humblest one can reach it".
(Poems, ed.1915, p.287.)

A slightly more philosophic tone pervades "Appreciation":

"My muvver's ist the nicest one
'At ever lived wiz folks;
She lets you have ze mostes' fun,
An' laffs at all your jokes.

I got an old maid auntie too,
The worst you ever saw;
Her eyes ist bore you through and through
She ain't a bit like ma.

So when you fink what muvver knows
An' aunts and uncles tan't
It skeers a feller; ist suppose
His muvver'd been a aunt."

SHERMAN

A less well known poet, but one whose songs for children have found a small but permanent place, is Frank Dempster Sherman. His "Little Folk Lyrics" is disappointing after the simple realism of Riley and Dunbar and the lucid beauty of Stevenson. Most of the poems in the book seem rather to suggest fancies to a child rather than reproduce the child's own. And many of them are written in a style almost incomprehensible to children. I can remember as a child the mysterious and puzzling beauty of "The Archer", set to an intricate melody; "Snowflakes", on the other hand, made an instant imaginative appeal. "The Shadows", "Ghost Fairies" and Flying Kite" are among the most childlike of the lyrics, the last revealing something of Stevenson's qualities;

"I often sit and wish that I
Could be a kite up in the sky
.....
And follow all the ships that sail
Like me before the merry gale,
Until at last with them I came
To some place with a foreign name."

In "Daisies" we have a pretty fancy about the stars and the moon:

"And often while I'm dreaming so,
Across the sky the Moon will go;
It is a lady sweet and fair
Who comes to gather daisies there."

Most of his poetic fancies about nature are less happily expressed. Sherman loved nature and he loved children; but in too many cases he wrote his nature descriptions neither as a child nor for a child. An uncharitable reader might find some

basis for the suspicion that he included certain poems in this collection simply because he could find no other audience for them.

THOMPSON

Francis Thompson's poems contain a number of descriptions of child friends, and one child lyric, the tone of which may be suggested from the opening lines:

"Little Jesus, wast thou shy
Once, and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me?
.....
Hadst thou ever any toys
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst thou play in Heaven with all
The angels that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles?"[1]

The author of lines like these should have produced more child poetry than he did.

NOYES

Alfred Noyes has shown in his poems such a genuine love and sympathy for childhood that the failure to discover among them any child lyrics comes as a distinct surprise. "The Newspaper Boy" is descriptive; "On the Downs" is a reminiscence similar to the "Intimations"; "The Dream-Child's Invitation" approaches most nearly the child lyric.

SOWERBY

Among recent books for children, "Childhood", by Githa Sowerby, is among the best. Her little poems are consistently childlike in spirit and diction, without sacrificing delicacy of sentiment and a romantic rather than a realistic choice of subject. "Home" expresses a child's interest in the children of long ago who once played at shuttle cock among the hollyhocks in the garden;

"Nurse says that years before I came
This house and sky were just the same,
The garden roses too;
And other children played and hid
Among the lily leaves and did
The things I like to do."

"Comfort" tells of the land where broken toys go; "The Monkey" breathes the fascination of the organ-grinder; and "The Old Chest" is a dream-place looking out upon

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[1] Works, "Ex Ore Infantium".

the sea. The reaction of a child to familiar places and events is vividly given by the poem "In Church":

"I think about the people's heads,
And what the long words mean,
And why the little village boys
Should be so clean .....
And then the parson reads his book,-
A bee goes buzzing by,
He came in through the sunny door-
I wonder why?"

The child's ambition is well told in "His Book":

"When I am big enough to write my copy by myself,
I'm going to get a heavy book like those upon the shelf,
And in it I am going to put just everything I know,
The house and fields and all my funny thoughts that come and go."

Miss Sowerby's child poems are few in number. But all of them (with possibly one exception, "Seasons") run true to type. Hers is the only book which I have examined so far which shows a conscious attempt to write only genuine child lyrics.

DE LA MARE

The most productive, as well as the most prominent, of present writers upon child subjects is Walter de la Mare. His child lyrics are marked by an uncanny insight into the child's experience, an eery fantasy which lifts them above the commonplace, and an abiding sense of humor which serves as a wholesome corrective to any tendency toward sentimentality or over-elaboration of thought. "The Dunce" is one of the most realistic of his poems:

"Why does he still keep ticking?
Why does his round white face
Stare at me over the books and ink,
And mock at my disgrace?
Why does that that thrush call, 'Dunce, dunce, dunce!'?
Why does that bluebottle buzz?
Why does the sun so silent shine?
And what do I care if it does?"[1]

"The Cupboard" is the expression of a more ecstatic mood:

"I know a little cupboard,
With a teeny tiny key,
And there's a jar of Lollypops
For me, me, me.

.....

[1] Peacock Pie, by Walter de la Mare; p.14. The originality and charm of the illustrations (by W. Heath Robinson), and the attractiveness of the whole volume are noteworthy.

I have a small fat grandmamma,
With a very slippery knee,
And she's Keeper of the Cupboard,
With the key, key, key."[1]

A very natural thought, but one with a suggestion of something more than meets the ear, is found the "The Window":

"Behind the blinds I sit and watch
The people passing- passing by;
And not a single one can see
My tiny watching eye.

They cannot see my little room,
All yellowed with the shaded sun;
They do not even know I'm here;
Nor guess when I am gone."[2]

The overtone of mystery is sounded more strongly in "The Little Green Orchard", "Some One" and "The Old Stone House". The last expresses very effectively a childs terror of old, lonely places.

"Nothing on the gray roof, nothing on the brown;
Only a little greening where the rain drips down;
Nobody at the window, nobody at the door,
Only a little hollow which a foot once wore;
But still I tread on tiptoe, still tiptoe on I go,
Past nettles, porch, and weedy well, for oh, I know
A friendless face is peering, and a clear still eye
Peeps closely through the casement as my step goes by." [3]

We have something more here than a mere photographing or "phonographing" of a child We feel in it the hand of the artist always, and his personality; as we read, de la Mare stands behind our shoulder, smiling his little inscrutable smile. But we have also the real child. The ~~real~~ difference between de la Mare's child lyrics and those of most others, is that he does not repeat to us, as does Riley, the things that children say aloud; he reveals to us the things which, if they express them at all, they only whisper.

Of the host of contributors to current magazines little definite criticism can be made here.[4] Many of them make some reference to children, but there is the usual

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[1] Peacock Pie, p.42. [2] p.61. [3] p.143.

[4] Among the names which might be mentioned are those of Lucia Peeples, Mary Aldis, Carl Sandburg, Masters, Dresbach, Mary W. Slater, Alden Sanborn, Anna M. Wells, Nancy Byrd Turner, William Davies, and Margaret Woods. Of these, Miss Turner, who writes for the Youth's Companion, keeps most closely and consistently to the child lyric. Among the writers who have rushed into more formal print is Ruth Sawyer, who

small proportion of child lyrics. "Our Camilla" by Jean Davis is

JEAN DAVIS

one of the best single poems published in recent years.

"To-day we had a funeral for Camilla,
All along Spring Street past the candy-store.
The street looks different when you're in a carriage,
You notice things you never saw before,
And feel so strange-
And all the other children stop and stare.
I used to stare, too, once, and want to ride-
I wore my new black coat and mamma cried,
The day it snowed Camilla had no carfare,
We never had a horse until to-day!
We had two for Camilla, trimmed with jet;
We left her out in Brooklyn-
She ain't home yet." [1]

A noteworthy development in children's poetry is the custom instituted by Poetry of occasionally setting aside space for poetry by children. Arvia MacKaye, and the two Conkling children, (Hilda, four years old, Elsa five) have been the most consistent contributors. Hilda's poem about the moon shows a wonderfully apt use of words:

"The red moon comes out in the night:
When I'm asleep, the moon comes pattering up
Into the trees.
Then I peep out my window
To watch the moon go by."

THE CONKLING CHILDREN, HILDA and ELSA

Many of their poems are, as children's should be, about flowers and sunshine. Here are two of Hilda's:

"There's dozens full of dandelions
Down in the field:
Little gold plates,
Little gold dishes in the grass.
I cannot count them,
But the fairies know every one."

"The garden is full of flowers,
All dancing round and round,
John-flowers,
Mary-flowers,
Polly-flowers,
Cauli-flowers-
They dance round and round,
And bow down and down
To a black-eyed daisy."

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has just published a small volume called The Child's Year-book. One hesitates to call any book worthless; but one which offers so little that is new or beautiful or correct might at least have awaited publication until the present paper-shortage is relieved.

[1] Others, Vol.3, No. 3.

Elsa's poems betray less of whimsical humor, more of the emotional and the dramatic:

"The daisies are shining in the sun.
March till you come to the creek-
The creek will show you the way to the moon.
March, march, march!
The little creek runs by all day
Singing, 'River, river!"-
And never stops to play,
It just keeps going night and day,
March!" [1]

The only objection which can be made to their work is that their verses are rather of the hot-house variety, dreams rather than life. The ordinary reader feels a need for something a little warmer or more substantial, something more of downright little Marjorie Fleming- to give weight to these delicately ethereal fancies. But it is better, perhaps, if a just balance cannot be made, to err on the side of poetry rather than of prosiness; for it will always be gilly-flowers rather than cauliflowers that we go to seek in the garden of childhood.

At this point the history of the child lyric must give way to prophecy of its future. That it has a future no one can doubt who has followed the development of the child lyric through three centuries: its first green shoot in the parsonage garden of Herrick; its growth under the determined harrowing and watering of Watts and his disciples; its delicate blossoming in the heart of Blake; and its full fruitage under the skilled touch of Robert Louis Stevenson and Githa Sowerby and de la Mare, who have scattered broadcast the seeds for a new harvest in contemporary fields of poetry.

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[1] All the poems quoted here are from Poetry, Vol. VIII, No.IV, July, 1916.

Chapter III

Problems and Prospects

In any discussion of the child lyric the questions which naturally arise are: what is it? Is it worth cultivation as a literary form? What standards should it follow? And what are its prospects for development in the near future? The first two questions have already been answered satisfactorily I hope, in the foregoing pages; and the last two have been at least suggested. But there are several problems which demand more explicit discussion: chief amont them, the questions of verse form and diction, special methods of encouraging the writing of child lyrics, and the relation of the child lyric to the general trend of the new poetry.

There is no one kind of verse form which can claim superiority over others as the vehicle for the child lyric. Nearly every kind of verse has been used for it; and even prose has not been disdained as a possible medium. The prose poems of Pierre Loti should offer, if not a model, at least an inspiration for future writers; but owing either to the limitations of the English language or to our general distaste for lyrical prose, (unless chopped into verse lengths) prose will probably continue to keep its place in narrative and dramatic treatment of child subjects. Free verse would seem to offer the medium most apt to combine the true lyrical tone with realistic simplicity. At least one case is known where the spontaneous outburst of a child under deep emotional stress has been preserved in free-verse form[1]

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[1]Brander Matthews, A Study of Versification, p.10.

"My dolly is dead! My dolly is dead!
I loved my dolly, and I didn't want her to die!
But she died, and I buried her.
And I wanted to bury her
In the worst place I could find;
So I looked all over the flat
For the very worst place I could find.
And I buried her in the pail-
In the pail under the sink in the kitchen,
In the pail where we put the old dinners
And the old breakfasts and my crusts when I won't eat 'em:
And I buried her there.
It was the very worst place I could find,
I buried her on top of the dinner
And under the breakfast,
And there's oatmeal where her head ought to be.
And Annie will put her on the dumbwaiter,
And she'll send her down to the janitor,
And the janitor will put her into the barrel,
And he'll put the barrel out on the sidewalk;
And the man will come along with the wagon,
And he'll empty her into the wagon,
And he'll drive her down to the dock,
And he'll dump her into the river
Without any head and without any legs-
And I didn't want her to die!
My dolly, my dolly, my dolly,
Is dead and I've buried her.
And I didn't want her to die!"

Herrick and Philips wrote in octosyllabic couplets; Watts limited his verse to long metre, short metre and common metre; the lyrics of Blake, Robert Louis Stevenson, Githa Sowerby, and de la Mare are less regular in their stanza form, but they make consistent use of rhyme, either in simple or more complicated arrangements. The child lyric makes upon the poet, after all, much the same demands as other poetry. Of the qualities of "simplicity, sensuousness, passion", the last two can find expression in an infinite variety of rhythms and verse forms; while simplicity, which is perhaps the prime requisite in a child lyric, depends not so much upon rhyme or meter as it does upon thought, syntax and diction.

The question of diction is one of peculiar difficulty in the writing of a child lyric. In general, the nearer the poet keeps to the vocabulary of a child, the better. Especially is this true in the treatment of commonplace things, such as a child's description of "The Moo-cow-moo."

"The moo-cow-moo's got a tail like a rope
En it's ravel'd down where it grows;
En it's just like feeling a piece of soap
All over the moo-cow's nose."[1]

A comparison of this poem with another on the same subject will show the fatal effect of stilted and ultra-poetical diction in child verse:

"Moolycow, moolycow, have you not been
Regaling all day where the pastures are green?
No doubt it was pleasant, dear Mooly, to see
The clear-running brook and the wide-spreading tree."[2]

Even in more subtle kinds of poetry the childish vocabulary is usually adequate. But there are undoubtedly situations and emotions in a child's life which would tax even an adult's powers of expression. In such cases, strict realism, which is not an end in itself but a mere instrument and safeguard of art, should be sacrificed for poetic effectiveness. Congruity of emotional tone must be the final test. A principle which might prove a useful guide is that any subject upon which children are apt to talk should be treated in the child's own words; and that only in those themes or shades of feeling which a child rarely or never attempts to express should the poet feel free to employ other means. And if those other means fail to sustain a truly childlike tone, the introduction of incongruous terms which smack of the sophisticated or the pedantic, then in most cases the poem had better be changed from a direct child lyric to an indirect one, such as Loti's and France's stories, Whitman's "Out of the Cradle" or Tagore's "White Hyacinths".[3]

The genuine child lyric, however, bids fair to increase in numbers and to take the place of the earlier indirect attempts to portray childhood. Two distinct plans have already been suggested for encouraging such an increase. One method is to persuade children themselves to write down their fancies or dictate them to mother or teacher. Mrs. Conkling's experiment has already pointed the way to hitherto unsuspected poetical abilities in children. Mr. Lamborn, head master in an English school, has tried out the same plan on a larger scale. In his "Rudiments of Criticism" he calls poetry "the special gift of childhood," and he has published, in an

[1] Coussens, Poems Children Love, p.50.
[2] Wiggin, Posy Ring, p.217.
[3] The Crescent Moon.

Appendix, specimens of school-children's verses, "so as you would wonder to heare how soone even children will beginne to versifie."

The other plan is to institute a series of prizes for amateur poetry dealing with childish subjects. By this means it is hoped not only to secure good child lyrics (for young people should at least be better able than older writers to remember their own childhood) but also to exercise a wholesome influence over our new poetry as a whole.

Such an aim as this suggests an interesting comparison between the child lyric and impressionistic or imagist verse. (If in this discussion I ~~seem to~~ misrepresent the aims and qualities of the imagists, I beg their pardon. I speak not as one of them, but as an ordinary, interested but uninitiated reader of their verse.) Impressionistic art has often been compared with the artistic attempts of the insane; but it seems to me a more profitable alliance might be encouraged between it and child poetry. Whether there is any profound sociological or psychological connection between the two, let some wiser investigator decide; but they have at least striking surface analogies. Compare the two following bits of verse:

The Pool

"Are you alive?
I touch you.
You quiver like a sea-fish.
I cover you with my net.
What are you- banded one?"[1]

The Discovery

"One day I found a lonely pool
Among the rocks and sands;
Shadows and coloured stones were there
And weeds with floating hands.

An angry bird screamed overhead-
It was a frightening place-
And sunk among the weeds and stones
I saw my drowning face." [2]

The two poems might have been changed overnight, and their publishers would hardly have detected the deception, although the first was intended for an imagistic anthology, the other for a sweetly pictured children's book. To the ordinary reader

[1] By H.D. in Some Imagist Poets. [2] Sowerby, Childhood.

both are childlike, except that the second, with its greater clearness of ideas, might have come from an older child.

The imagist poets themselves would be the first, no doubt, to resent the epithet childish or even childlike. Many of them, indeed, are anything but unsophisticated: they seem only, by over-cultivation of their senses, to have suffered a kind of atavistic relapse,- one hesitates to call it senility. These relapses are sometimes happy ones, in their simplicity and their refreshing unconcern for moral problems. They would be oftener happy ones if the poets, instead of nourishing erotic theories of rhythmus and art for art's sake, would clear the atmosphere by a conscious attempt to reproduce the sensations of children. Child poetry must necessarily be simpler, less rich in associations and ideas, than the best poetry representing the thoughts of a mature and moral being. But it is vitally connected with life, and not a contrary force like the imagist movement, through its office of interpreting the first dim beginnings of the thinking man and his problems. A school of child poetry would at least be intelligible to the general public. Most gentle readers have been children once, and would respond with some sympathy even to the worst specimens which might be produced by the new poets. "Idiots?" I can hear the Man of Wrath say kindly, as he sits down to write a magazine article about them,"No, no, by no means. But children- nice little agreeable children. I very much like to hear them talk. It is all so young and fresh what they think and what they believe."

A man never really puts away childish things, he merely wants them in their proper place, and labeled. Childhood, after all, is childhood. It will not solve men's problems of war and livelihood and the life after death. But more and more, as he wrestles with these problems, daily increasing in complexity, will he come to find rest from the struggle in the cool freshness of that garden where he roamed so long ago.

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